CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Melville FTTP Upgrade
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2018
Proponent:	Triangle Communications
Location:	5N 14E 36 6N 16E 36
County:	Wheatland & Sweetgrass
Trust:	Common

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Triangle Communications has requested an easement strip twenty feet wide, 10 feet on each side of the centerline through above said tracts to install and maintain an underground telecommunication cable

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO)
Central Montana Communications Inc
Surface Lessees: Ed Breding & Cayuse Livestock

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The DNRC, and NELO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all required permits for the proposed project. The proponent is responsible for settling all surface damages with the surface lessees.

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant an easement for an underground telecommunication cable.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant an easement for an underground telecommunication cable.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Summary by Map Unit — Wheatland County Area, Montana (MT624)

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Component name (percent)	Rating reasons (numeric values)	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
9A	Havre-Harlake complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded				0.4	10.3%
112C	Cabbart-Delpoint, calcareous, loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes				0.1	3.1%
134B	Yamacall loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	Slight	Yamacall (85%)		0.2	6.0%
			Eapa (5%)			
			Kremlin (5%)			
			Delpoint (5%)			
134C	Yamacall loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Yamacall (85%)		0.6	14.0%
			Eapa (5%)			
			Kremlin (5%)			
			Delpoint (5%)			
830B	Eapa loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes				0.1	1.6%
Subtotals for Soil Survey Area					**1.4**	**35.1%**
Totals for Area of Interest					**4.0**	**100.0%**

Tables — Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail) — Summary By Map Unit

Summary by Map Unit — Sweet Grass County Area, Montana (MT639)

Summary by Map Unit — Sweet Grass County Area, Montana (MT639)

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Component name (percent)	Rating reasons (numeric values)	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
210D	Cabba loam, 2 to 15 percent slopes	Slight	Cabba (85%)		0.4	10.1%
			Vershal (4%)			
			Ticell (3%)			
			Amor (2%)			
			Doney (2%)			
			Absarokee (2%)			
221C	Amor-Farnuf loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Amor (50%)		1.6	39.3%
			Farnuf (42%)			
			Cabba (3%)			
			Reedwest (3%)			
			Work (2%)			
229C	Absarokee-Cabba loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Absarokee (50%)		0.6	15.5%
			Cabba (40%)			
			Winifred (4%)			
			Linwell (2%)			
			Ticell (2%)			
			Castner (2%)			
Subtotals for Soil Survey Area					**2.6**	**64.9%**

All soils involved have an off trail erosion hazard rating of "slight."

No cumulative effects to geology and soil quality, stability and moisture are anticipated.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The proposed R/W route will take place in the fish creek drainage in 6N 16E 36. If necessary, a 310 permit will be acquired by Triangle Communications.

No important ground or surface water will be impacted by the proposed project.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are anticipated.

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The air quality in the area will not be affected.

No cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The proposed easement route would run through tame pasture and native rangeland. The disturbed area will be limited to the trenching/ripping area. Seeding and reclamation will be required to maintain grass cover on rangeland. If cover hasn't established in two growing seasons the proponent will be responsible for reseeding.

If re-seeding is necessary the proponent will acquire certified, weed free seed and refer to the Plant Materials Tech Note No. MT-46 (Rev. 4) dated September 2013 for seeding rates.

Noxious weeds are known to be in the area from the previous lease evaluations and disturbed sites will be monitored for noxious weeds and treated until eradicated

No rare plants or cover types are present.
No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

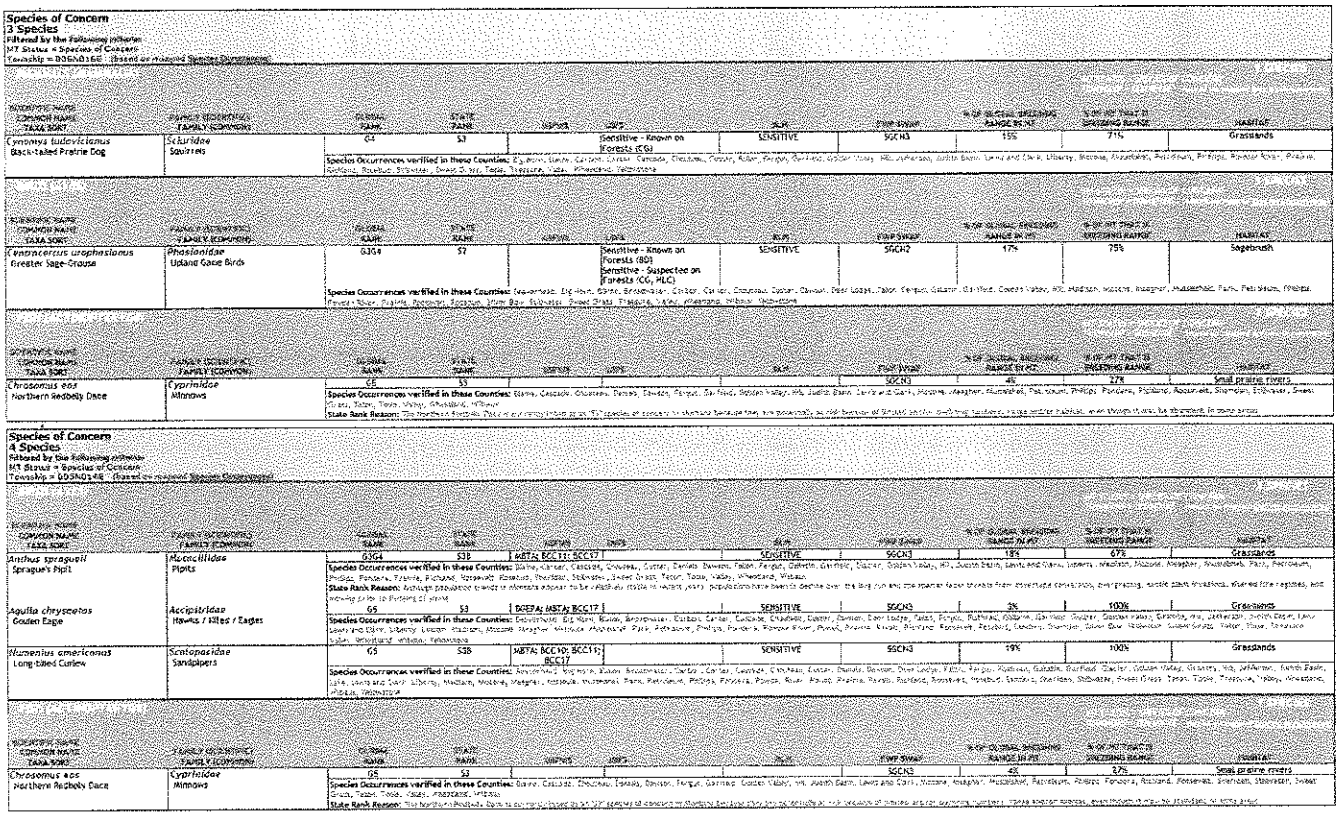
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mt/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2_05773

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:
Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The area is not considered critical wildlife habitat. Most of the work is done by adjacent public roads where wildlife habitat quality has already been reduced.

No cumulative effects are anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:
Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.



Temporary displacement may occur during the installation of the proposed telecommunication cable. No population effect is anticipated.

There are no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources on this site.

No cumulative effects to habitat are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class III intensity level cultural and paleontological resources inventory was conducted of the area of potential effect on state land. Despite a detailed examination, no cultural or fossil resources were identified and no additional archaeological or paleontological investigative work is recommended. The proposed project will have No Effect to Antiquities as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. A formal report of findings has been prepared and is on file with the DNRC and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are anticipated.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:
List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed in this EA Checklist.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

There will be some health and safety concerns associated with the operation of heavy equipment. The proponent and their employees are aware of any health and safety hazards and accept them as occupational hazards.

Once the installation has been completed, there will be no health and safety concerns associated with this project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

This project will not add to or deter from other industrial, agricultural, or commercial activities in this area.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The project will not create any new jobs. These positions are already held by employees of the proponent. No cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:
Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There will not be any increases in traffic or traffic patterns if this project is approved.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:
List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting this project.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreation or wilderness activities.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

The proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments. Population and housing will not be affected.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed project will have no effect on any unique quality of the area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The proposed project will not have any cumulative economic or social effect.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Brandon Sandau
	Title:	Land Use Specialist
Signature:		**Date**: 3/28/2018

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant an easement for an underground telecommunication cable.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined that no negative long-term environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	XXX	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Barny D. Smith
	Title:	Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature:		**Date**: 3/28/2018


Melville FTTP Upgrade
Triangle Communications
0 0.035 0.07 0.14
Miles
25
30
TONY CREEK RD
5N 14E
35
36
US HIGHWAY 191 N
31
5N 15E
4N 14E
01
06
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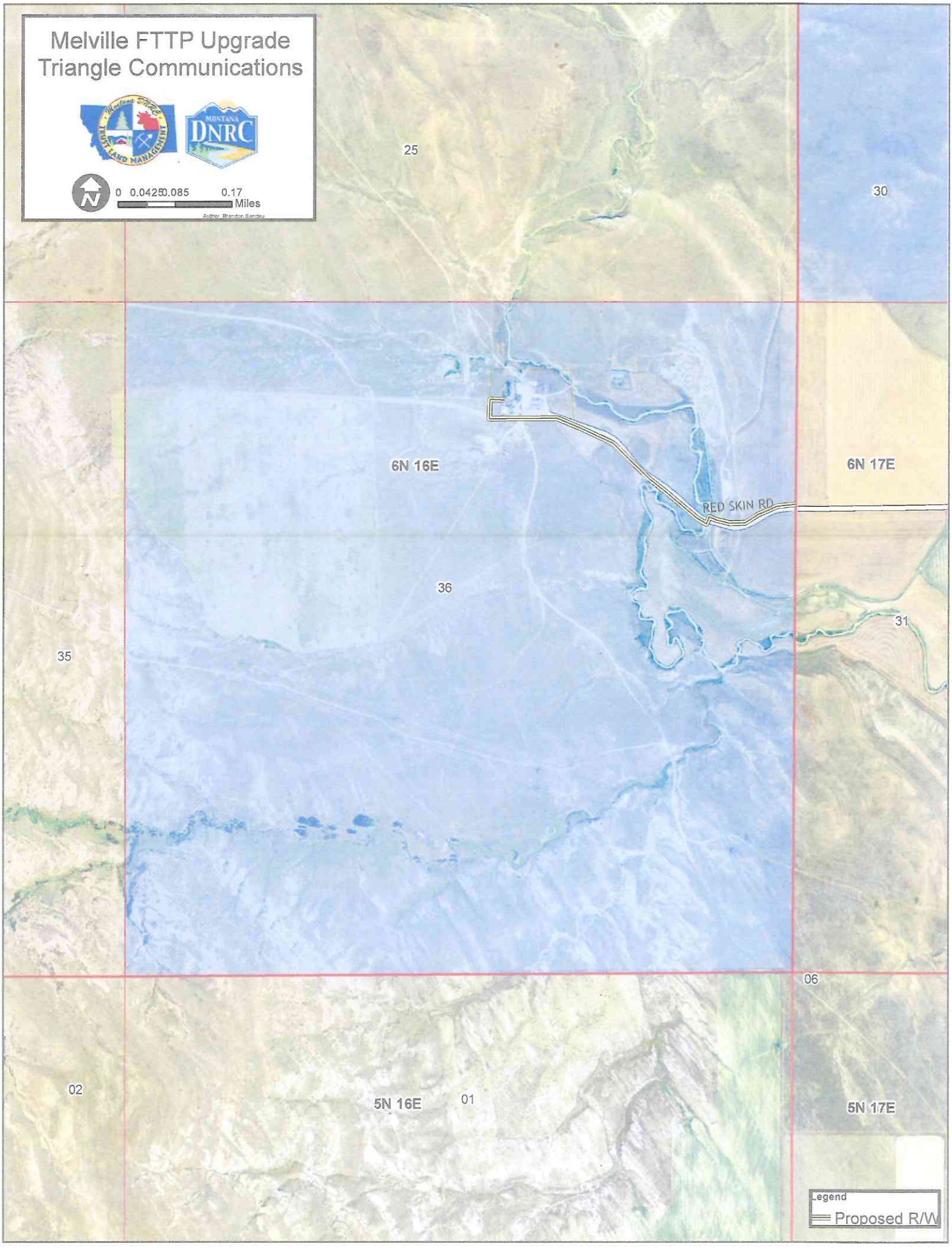
Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Commun
Legend
Proposed R/W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Proposed R/W